

themists of distance amid which the prospect of office, like a mirage of the desert, allures from afar. Mr. Wood's amendment attracted all the support that could be hoped for, considering that it was open to the objection already alluded to, that, although more gently phrased, it equally with Sir John Macdonald's was clearly a motion of non-confidence. Had the leader of the Opposition proposed a substantive motion, couched in language less hostile to the Administration, the division-list would have showed a more favourable result. Perhaps that would not have fulfilled the right hon. gentleman's strategic purpose, but it would certainly have been infinitely more satisfactory, not merely to the Canadian interests primarily concerned, but to the electorate as a whole. Mr. Wood's amendment was negated by a vote of one hundred and nine to seventy-eight—a majority of thirty-one, being a gain of thirteen over the vote taken a year ago, notwithstanding the defection of a number of Government supporters.

It is far from our intention to attempt an outline of a debate which was barren and uninteresting throughout; yet it may be well to make a few remarks on the laboured speech of the Hon. Mr. Mills. The Minister of the Interior appears still to labour under the delusion that political economy is an exact science, the cardinal principles of which are as certain and universal in their application as those of natural philosophy. In Europe, especially on the Continent and in an increasing degree from year to year in England, the disciples of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Mill are beginning to understand that only a small portion of their so-called science is deserving of the name. Where man is a factor in the calculation, there can be no universal truths predicated with sufficient certainty to be an infallible guide either in government or in social life. To lay down with *ex cathedra* positiveness a fiscal policy from the textbooks, supposed to be adaptable to all times and places, is as irrational as to frame a constitution with a similar purpose. Even the Hon. Mr. Wells, who is 'the guide, philosopher, and friend' of Mr. Mills, has sagacity enough to perceive that, in economical matters, it is wise to be content with moulding and applying axioms to the needs and circumstances of a particular commu-

nity, instead of attempting the impossible task of stretching every country upon the Procrustes' bed of *à priori* doctrinaireism. The Minister of the Interior repeats the saws of the elder economists as glibly as if they were indisputable and irrefragable principles, like the laws of Newton and Kepler. The diversion of capital and labour from their natural channels is one of the mischiefs denounced by Mr. Mills, without the slightest regard to the fact that Canada, in regard to capital and labour, differs *toto cælo* from England, and that no uniform maxims can be applied to both, without serious modification. Moreover, capital and labour are not, in fact, transferred so readily as Mr. Mills and his mentors seem to imagine. The one is, of course, more fluid than the other; yet even it has a tendency to flow in fixed channels from which it is not easy to divert it. In the case of labour, especially skilled labour, in a new country bordered upon by a much larger community, speaking the same language, the diversion seldom or never takes place. The printer, the sugar refiner, the tobacco manufacturer, and the cotton-spinner have learned their trades in many cases across the frontier or the ocean, and if their occupation be taken away, they do not turn farmers or carpenters on that account. Instead of abandoning their trades, they abandon the country, and, in the long run, capital follows them. It is not, therefore, a choice between the employment of capital and labour in a more or less advantageous way, but the more important one for a new country like ours, whether we shall surrender both agents in production to the United States, or enjoy them ourselves—whether we shall attract or repel them. When a publisher discovers that the Imperial copyright laws prevent his branch of business being remunerative, he does not change his trade and employ his capital in another way; he simply transfers the seat of his operations to the other side of the lines; his capital is employed elsewhere, and those engaged in paper-making, printing, and book-binding here suffer proportionately. It is hardly necessary again to expose the fallacy that a fair measure of protection to a number of manufacturing interests is afforded at the expense of the community. That is never the case, unless the protection be extravagant, and even then, unless a monopoly were guaranteed